IN THE CLAIMS

1-50.   (Canceled)

51.   (Currently Amended) A method of operating a computer system, the method comprising:

    receiving a request for an authentication[[,]] at a microcontroller included in a bridge, ~~the~~

        ~~request being received~~ from a bus external to the bridge;

    requesting security data from a security device;

    receiving the security data from the security device[[,]] at the microcontroller;

    evaluating the security data; and

    approving the authentication at the microcontroller [[if]] responsive to the security data

        [[is]] being evaluated as acceptable.

52.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 51, further comprising:

    disapproving the authentication at the microcontroller [[if]] responsive to the security

        data [[is]] being evaluated as unacceptable.

53.   (Original) The method of claim 51, wherein evaluating the security data comprises requesting an indication of acceptability inside SMM.

54.   (Original) The method of claim 51, wherein requesting security data from a security device comprises requesting the security data from the security device over a direct connection between the security device and the microcontroller; and

wherein receiving the security data from the security device, at the microcontroller, comprises receiving the security data from the security device over the direct connection to the microcontroller.

55.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 51, wherein requesting security data from a security device comprises requesting biometric data from a biometric device; wherein receiving the security data from the security device, at the microcontroller, comprises receiving the biometric data from the biometric device, at the microcontroller; wherein evaluating the security data comprises evaluating the biometric data; and wherein approving the authentication [[if]] responsive to the security data [[is]] being evaluated as acceptable comprises approving the authentication [[if]] responsive to the biometric data [[is]] being evaluated as acceptable.

56.   (Currently Amended) A method of operating a computer system, the method, comprising the steps of:

>   receiving a request for an authentication[[,]] at a microcontroller included in a bridge, the request being received from a bus external to the bridge via a controller included in the bridge, the controller being configured to provide access to a bus internal to the bridge;

>   requesting security data from a security device;

>   receiving the security data from the security device[[,]] at the microcontroller;

>   evaluating the security data; and

>   approving the authentication at the microcontroller [[if]] responsive to the security data [[is]] being evaluated as acceptable.

57.   Currently Amended) The method of claim 56, further comprising ~~the step of:~~

disapproving the authentication <u>at the microcontroller</u> [[if]] <u>responsive to</u> the security

data [[is]] <u>being</u> evaluated as unacceptable.

58.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 56, wherein ~~the step of~~ evaluating the

security data comprises the step of requesting an indication of acceptability inside SMM.

59.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 56, wherein ~~the step of~~ requesting

security data from a security device comprises ~~the step of~~ requesting the security data from the

security device over a direct connection between the security device and the microcontroller; and

wherein ~~the step of~~ receiving the security data from the security device, at the microcontroller,

comprises ~~the step of~~ receiving the security data from the security device over the direct

connection to the microcontroller.

60.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 56, wherein ~~the step of~~ requesting

security data from a security device comprises ~~the step of~~ requesting biometric data from a

biometric device; wherein ~~the step of~~ receiving the security data from the security device, at the

microcontroller, comprises ~~the step of~~ receiving the biometric data from the biometric device, at

the microcontroller; wherein ~~the step of~~ evaluating the security data comprises ~~the step of~~

evaluating the biometric data; and wherein ~~the step of~~ approving the authentication [[if]]

<u>responsive to</u> the security data [[is]] <u>being</u> evaluated as acceptable comprises ~~the step of~~

approving the authentication [[if]] <u>responsive to</u> the biometric data [[is]] <u>being</u> evaluated as acceptable.

61.   (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium encoded with instructions that, when executed by a computer system, performs a method for operating the computer system, the method comprising:

>   receiving a request for an authentication[[,]] at a microcontroller included in a bridge, ~~the~~

>>   ~~request being received~~ from a bus external to the bridge via a controller included

>>   in the bridge;

>   requesting security data from a security device;

>   receiving the security data from the security device[[,]] at the microcontroller;

>   evaluating the security data; and

>   approving the authentication <u>at the microcontroller</u> [[if]] <u>responsive to</u> the security data

>>   [[is]] <u>being</u> evaluated as acceptable.

62.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium of claim 61, the method further comprising[[:]] disapproving the authentication <u>at the microcontroller</u> [[if]] <u>responsive to</u> the security data [[is]] <u>being</u> evaluated as unacceptable.

63.   (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 61, wherein evaluating the security data comprises requesting an indication of acceptability inside SMM.

64.   (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 61, wherein requesting security data from a security device comprises requesting the security data from the security device over a direct connection between the security device and the microcontroller; and

wherein receiving the security data from the security device, at the microcontroller, comprises receiving the security data from the security device over the direct connection to the microcontroller.

65.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium of claim 61, wherein requesting security data from a security device comprises requesting biometric data from a biometric device; wherein receiving the security data from the security device, at the microcontroller, comprises receiving the biometric data from the biometric device, at the microcontroller; wherein evaluating the security data comprises evaluating the biometric data; and wherein approving the authentication [[if]] responsive to the security data [[is]] being evaluated as acceptable comprises approving the authentication [[if]] responsive to the biometric data [[is]] being evaluated as acceptable.